



# THE DERBY DISPATCH

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## TRIO OF ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY RACES ON TAP THIS WEEKEND LED BY FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH, RETURN OF CHAMPION ESSENTIAL QUALITY IN SOUTHWEST

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021)** – With just nine weeks remaining until the first Saturday in May, the Road to the Kentucky Derby will continue this weekend with a trio of stops led by the Championship Series' \$300,000 Fountain of Youth (Grade II) at Gulfstream Park.

Along with Saturday's Fountain of Youth, the Road to the Kentucky Derby Prep Season will culminate with Friday's \$100,000 John Battaglia Memorial at Turfway and Saturday's \$750,000 Southwest (GIII), which will see the long-awaited return of champion **Essential Quality**.

The Fountain of Youth, a launching pad for South Florida-based horses to the Florida Derby (GI), will award the Top 4 finishers points on a 50-20-10-5 scale. The John Battaglia Memorial and Southwest are both worth 10-4-2-1 points to the Top 4.

Buckle up: the next two months will bring many ups and downs on the road to the first Saturday in May.

**HOLY BULL WINNER GREATEST HONOUR TOPS GRADE II, \$300,000 FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH** – **Courtland Farms'** 5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-length Holy Bull (GIII) winner **Greatest Honour** leads a field of 10 3-year-olds that were entered in Saturday's \$300,000 Fountain of Youth Stakes (GII) at Gulfstream Park.

The Fountain of Youth, part of the Road to the Kentucky Derby Championship Series and a springboard to the \$750,000 Florida Derby (GI) on Saturday, March 27, is slated as Race 14 with a post time of 6:10 p.m. (all times Eastern). The 1 1/16-mile race offers the winner 50 points and a likely spot in the starting gate for the Grade I, \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve on Saturday, May 1. The runner-up will receive 20 points while the third and fourth place finishers notch 10 and 5 points, respectively.

Greatest Honour burst onto the Derby scene at the end of 2020 when he broke his maiden by 1 1/2 lengths and rallied from seven lengths off the early pace. He returned one month later in the Holy Bull and, in similar fashion, benefitted from a strong early pace to close ground emphatically at the head of the lane for his victory.

"I had a lot of confidence he'd run well but I didn't know what that meant," Hall of Fame trainer **Shug McGaughey III** said. "I maybe was a little surprised how well he ran and how much he dominated those horses. I was very please and pleased the way he came out of it. ... Two turns is a big help. All of his races around two turns have been good. I think he'll run as far as a horse wants to run."

**Jose Ortiz** has the return call on Greatest Honour who drew post No. 8.

Greatest Honour is taking a similar route to this year's Kentucky Derby as his conditioner did with 2013 winner **Orb**. In that year's Fountain of Youth, Orb dug in late to get by **Violence** in deep stretch. The victory catapulted Orb to wins in the Florida Derby and Kentucky Derby.

Another top competitor in Saturday's Fountain of Youth is **Three Diamonds Farm's** \$1 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (GI) winner **Fire At Will**. Trained by **Mike Maker**, Fire At Will is slated to make just his second-career start on dirt. His only other race on dirt was a half-length victory in the \$100,000 With Anticipation Stakes at Saratoga. Following that win, Fire At Will returned to turf for a front-running win in the \$150,000 Pilgrim Stakes (GII) at Belmont Park and used that race as a prep before the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf. Top New York-based rider **Kendrick Carmouche** will travel to South Florida for the mount on Fire At Will and the duo will break from post 4.

Also entered in the field is **Slam Dunk Racing, Madaket Stables, Wonder Stables** and **Michael Nentwig's** \$100,000 Swale Stakes (GIII) winner **Drain the Clock** for trainer **Saffie Joseph**. Drain the Clock, who was not on the early round of Triple Crown nominations, will stretch out in distance for the first time in Saturday's race. He'll break from the rail under jockey **Edgard Zayas**.

The complete field for Saturday's Fountain of Youth from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): Drain the Clock (Zayas, Joseph); **Prime Factor** (Irado Ortiz Jr., Todd Pletcher); **Sososublte** (Paco Lopez, Armando De La Certa); Fire At Will (Carmouche, Maker); **Jirafales** (Javier Castellano, Gustavo Delgado); **King's Ovation** (Corey Lanerie, Dale Romans); **Tarantino** (Tyler Gaffalione, Rodolphe Brisset); Greatest Honour (Jose Ortiz, McGaughey); **Tiz Tact Toe** (Rajiv Maragh, Bob Hess Jr.); **Papetu** (Junior Alvarado, Antonio Sano).

**CHAMPION 2-YEAR-OLD ESSENTIAL QUALITY SET FOR SEASONAL BOW IN SATURDAY'S GRADE III, \$750,000 SOUTHWEST** – It was a harrowing two weeks in Hot Springs, Ark. as winter weather ravaged the area causing a two-week delay in running the Southwest Stakes. Saturday's 1 1/16-mile race will see the long-awaited 3-year-old debut of **Godolphin's** 2-year-old champion colt **Essential Quality** as he faces six rivals in the Prep Season finale on the Road to the Kentucky Derby.

The Southwest Stakes, carded as Race 10 with a post time of 5:58 p.m. will award the Top 4 finishers 10-4-2-1 points but, most importantly, give many Derby fans a glimpse at the return of one of the early favorites for the first Saturday in May.

Essential Quality was able to dodge the winter weather at Oaklawn and remained at trainer **Brad Cox's** base at Fair Grounds in New Orleans. Following the original race's date on

Feb. 15, Cox worked Essential Quality two more times prior to Saturday's race. The undefeated colt will attempt to become the first Breeders' Cup Juvenile (GI) winner of the Southwest. Jockey **Luis Saez** has the mount and will break from the rail.

**Kirk and Judy Robison's** multiple Grade I winner **Jackie's Warrior** is also scheduled to make his seasonal bow in Saturday's Southwest for Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen**. With **Joel Rosario** in the irons, Jackie's Warrior finished fourth to Essential Quality in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile and also escaped the Arkansas freeze by remaining at Fair Grounds. The winner of the Hopeful (GI) and Champagne (GI) will break from post No. 4.

The complete field for the Southwest from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): Essential Quality (Saez, Cox, 3-2); **Saffa's Day** (Ricardo Santana Jr., Asmussen, 10-1); **Last Samurai** (Jon Court, Dallas Stewart, 12-1); Jackie's Warrior (Rosario, Asmussen, 8-5); **Santa Cruiser** (Richard Eramia, Keith Desormeaux, 12-1); **Woodhouse** (David Cabrera, C R Trout, 8-1); **Spielberg** (Martin Garcia, Bob Baffert, 9-2).

**GRADE I WINNER GRETZKY THE GREAT TOPS FRIDAY'S \$100,000 JOHN BATTAGLIA MEMORIAL – Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners and Gary Barber's \$250,000 Summer Stakes (Grade I) winner Gretzky the Great** is primed for his 3-year-old debut as the 3-1 favorite in Friday's \$100,000 John Battaglia Memorial at Turfway Park.

For the first time this year, the John Battaglia Memorial joined the Road to the Kentucky Derby Prep Season and will award the Top 4 finishers points on a 10-4-2-1 scale. The 1 1/16-mile event run over the Tapeta surface is carded as Race 5 with a post time of 8:16 p.m. (all times Eastern). The race attracted a full field of 12 3-year-olds with one also-eligible entrant. First post on Friday's program is 6 p.m.

The John Battaglia Memorial is named after Turfway Park's former General Manager and father of Churchill Downs longtime oddsmaker **Mike Battaglia**. The race annually serves as a steppingstone to the \$250,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII), which will be run for the 50<sup>th</sup> time this year at the Florence, Ky. track on Saturday, March 27.

Gretzky the Great, trained by **Mark Casse**, previously ran sixth in the \$1 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (GI) and was defeated 6 ¼ lengths by **Fire at Will** – one of the top interests in Saturday's \$300,000 Fountain of Youth at Gulfstream Park. Prior to his sixth-place effort Gretzky the Great had a trio of victories including his 3 ¼-length score in the Sept. 20 Summer run at one-mile on the turf. The Nyquist colt has one prior start on the Tapeta surface where he broke his maiden by 4 ¼ lengths. **Gerardo Corrales** will have the mount from the rail.

In total, the race attracted six Triple Crown nominees including **Robert LaPenta's** recent three-length maiden winner **Kinetic Sky**, who is slated to invade Turfway for trainer **Brad Cox** from his Fair Grounds base. The son of Runhappy will be ridden by **Deshawn Parker** from post No. 5.

Another horse likely to garner attention is **Sandin Syndicate Stable's** \$100,000 Ellis Park Juvenile winner **Pico d'Oro**. Trained by **Bill Morey**, Pico d'Oro will stretch out to 1 1/16 miles for the first time. In his last start, the son of Curlin finished third in the \$97,000 Jimmy Winkfield at Aqueduct. **John McKee** will ride Pico d'Oro from post 6.

The complete field for the John Battaglia Memorial from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): Gretzky the Great (Corrales, Casse, 3-1); **The Predicament** (Rafael Hernandez, Tim Hamm, 20-1); **Twirling Mamba** (Albin Jimenez, John Ortiz, 10-1); **Like the King** (Rafael Bejarano, Wesley Ward, 7-2); Kinetic Sky (Parker, Cox, 9-2); Pico d'Oro (McKee, Morey, 8-1); **Hard Rye Guy** (Chris Landeros, Ian Wilkes, 15-1); **Hush of a Storm** (Santiago Gonzales, Morey, 10-1); **Fort Moultrie** (Rodney Prescott, Reeve McGaughey, 20-1); **Notable Exception** (Declan Cannon, Jack Sisterson, 30-1); **Catman** (Manny Esquivel, Mike Maker, 15-1); **Warrior in Chief** (Robby Albarado, Kenny McPeck, 8-1). Also-eligible: **Bakwena** (Prescott, Darrin Miller, 20-1).

## PAST PERFORMANCES

Brinset.com Kentucky Derby Contenders Past Performances  
<https://bit.ly/3p728Wp>

John Battaglia Memorial Past Performances  
<https://bit.ly/2NVzpXI>

Southwest Past Performances  
<https://bit.ly/3qTRyUn>

Fountain of Youth Past Performances  
<https://bit.ly/2NvT00O>

## UPCOMING ROAD TO THE DERBY RACES

Date	Race	Track	Top 4 Points
Feb. 26	John Battaglia Memorial	Turfway	10-4-2-1
Feb. 27	Southwest	OP	10-4-2-1
Feb. 27	Fountain of Youth	GP	50-20-10-5
March 3	Road to the Kentucky Derby*	Kempton	20-8-4-2
March 5	Patton*	Dundalk	20-8-4-2
March 6	Gotham	Aqu	50-20-10-5
March 6	San Felipe	SA	50-20-10-5
March 6	Tampa Bay Derby	Tam	50-20-10-5
March 13	Rebel	OP	50-20-10-5
March 20	Louisiana Derby	FG	100-40-20-10
March 27	Jeff Ruby Steaks	TP	100-40-20-10
March 27	UAE Derby	Meydan	100-40-20-10
March 27	Florida Derby	GP	100-40-20-10
March 27	Fukuryu#	Nakayama	40-16-8-4
April 1	Cardinal Condition*	Chelmsford	30-12-6-3
April 3	Wood Memorial	Aqu	100-40-20-10
April 3	Blue Grass	Kee	100-40-20-10
April 3	Santa Anita Derby	SA	100-40-20-10
April 10	Arkansas Derby	OP	100-40-20-10
April 10	Lexington	Kee	20-8-4-2

# Japanese Road to the Kentucky Derby

\* European Road to the Kentucky Derby

Note: The date for the Sunland Derby has not been announced. In previous years it has been run on the third Sunday of March.

## QUOTABLE

Notable quotes provided by owners, trainers and jockeys to track officials:

### Fountain of Youth Stakes (GII):

**#1 Drain the Clock:** "I think he'll get two turns. But you don't know until they do it. He has stamina on his dam's side. He's won his races very impressively, so he deserves the chance." – trainer **Saffie Joseph**

**#4 Fire At Will:** “It’s a tough task, whether he’s a dirt horse or a turf horse, but he’s earned his chance.” – trainer **Mike Maker**

**#7 Tarantino:** “I think we’ve got to give him a shot to qualify on his own. If it doesn’t work, we’ll focus on the grass. ... Based on what I’ve been seeing, I think he needed the race (in the Holy Bull). I know he ran the first week of December but I think six or seven weeks were really good timing for him. We brought him the right way for the turf and dirt but we’re hoping he can be a couple lengths better this time. ... He’s a cocky horse. He’s never going to breeze in :47, out in :59. He’s a 49-and-2 but the way he does it, you can see that he’s doing good.” – trainer **Rodolphe Brisset**

**#8 Greatest Honour:** “I had a lot of confidence he’d run well (in the Jan. 30 Holy Bull) but I didn’t know what that meant. I maybe was a little surprised how well he ran and how much he dominated those horses. I was very please and pleased the way he came out of it. ... Two turns is a big help. All of his races around two turns have been good. I think he’ll run as far as a horse wants to run. ... He’s no pushover by any means. He had some things about him in his training that we had to get out of him. Being by Tapit, they can be a little difficult at times and he wasn’t an exception to that rule. But once we got him going in a forward positon, he’s taken everything well. It’s interesting how well he acts on race day and in the paddock and those types of things.” – trainer **Shug McGaughey III**

#### **Southwest Stakes (GIII):**

**#1 Essential Quality** – “He was ready to go (on Feb. 15) but when the weather rolled in and the race was postponed we just worked him two more times. The plan we had going into the race was to run him twice before the Kentucky Derby. The only thing this does now is shift his final prep plans to probably a race like the Blue Grass (GII) or Arkansas Derby (GI).” – trainer **Brad Cox**

**#7 Spielberg** – His last race, he just never really got into it. He struggled all the way around there. But he came back and worked well and I thought, ‘You know what? I know it’s going to be a short field and the races are sort of on top of each other.’ I thought I would give him another chance. It’s an easy ship so we’re just going to send him up there and see if he fits with those. – trainer **Bob Baffert**

#### **DERBY DETAIL**

**SUNLAND DERBY, OAKS CANCELED** – The Sunland Derby and Sunland Oaks, both Road to the Kentucky Derby and Oaks Championship Series events, respectively, have been removed from the schedule due to Sunland Park’s meet cancellation that was announced last Thursday.

**HIGHLY-REGARDED PREVALENCE TO MISS FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH DUE TO FEVER** – **Godolphin’s** highly-touted colt **Prevalence** was forced to postpone his plans of running in Saturday’s Fountain of Youth due to a fever. The colt’s next race plans remain in flux, according to trainer **Brendan Walsh**.

**KEEPMEINMIND TARGETS REBEL AFTER MISSING TRAINING** – Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) winner **Keepmeinmind** bypassed Saturday’s Southwest Stakes (GIII) in lieu of the March 13 Rebel (GII). According to trainer **Robertino Diodoro**, the colt was forced to miss several days of training due to inclement weather at Oaklawn.

#### **THE DERBY PREP RUNDOWN**

##### **John Battaglia Memorial**

Friday, Feb. 26, \$100,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M (Tapeta), Turfway Park (R5), Top 4 Points: 10-4-2-1. 8:16 p.m. ET. TV: TVG

#	Horse	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1.	Gretzky the Great	Gerardo Corrales	Mark Casse	3-1
2.	The Predicament*	Rafael Hernandez	Tim Hamm	20-1
3.	Twirling Mamba*	Albin Jiminez	John Ortiz	10-1
4.	Like the King	Rafael Bejarano	Wesley Ward	7-2
5.	Kinetic Sky	Deshawn Parker	Brad Cox	9-2
6.	Pico d'Oro*	John McKee	Bill Morey	8-1
7.	Hard Rye Guy*	Chris Landeros	Ian Wilkes	15-1
8.	Hush of a Storm	Santiago Gonzalez	Bill Morey	10-1
9.	Fort Moultrie*	Rodney Prescott	Reeve McGaughey	20-1
10.	Notable Exception	Declan Cannon	Jack Sistierson	30-1
11.	Catman*	Manny EsHquivel	Mike Maker	15-1
12.	Warrior in Chief	Robby Albarado	Kenny McPeck	8-1
13.	Bakwena* (AE)	Rodney Prescott	Darrin Miller	20-1

##### **Southwest Stakes (GIII)**

Saturday, Feb. 27, \$750,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Oaklawn (R10), Top 4 Points: 10-4-2-1. 5:58 p.m. ET. TV: Fox Sports 2, TVG.

#	Horse	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1.	Essential Quality	Luis Saez	Brad Cox	3-2
2.	Saffa's Day	Ricardo Santana Jr.	Steve Asmussen	10-1
3.	Last Samurai*	Jon Court	Dallas Stewart	12-1
4.	Jackie's Warrior	Joel Rosario	Steve Asmussen	8-5
5.	Santa Cruiser	Richard Eramia	Keith Desormeaux	12-1
6.	Woodhouse*	David Cabrera	C.R. Trout	8-1
7.	Spielberg	Martin Garcia	Bob Baffert	9-2

##### **Fountain of Youth (GII)**

Saturday, Feb. 27, \$300,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Gulfstream (R14), Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5. 6:10 p.m. ET. TV: TVG

#	Horse	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1.	Drain the Clock*	Edgard Zayas	Saffie Joseph Jr.	5-1
2.	Prime Factor	Irad Ortiz Jr.	Todd Pletcher	5-1
3.	Sososubtle	Paco Lopez	Armando De La Certa	20-1
4.	Fire At Will	Kendrick Carmouche	Mike Maker	7-2
5.	Jirafales	Javier Castellano	Gustavo Delgado	20-1
6.	King's Ovation	Corey Lanerie	Dale Romans	15-1
7.	Tarantino	Tyler Gaffalione	Rodolphe Brisset	8-1
8.	Greatest Honour	Jose Ortiz	Shug McGaughey	9-5
9.	Tiz Tact Toe	Rajiv Maragh	Bob Hess Jr.	30-1
10.	Papetu	Junior Alvarado	Antonio Sano	15-1

\* Not Triple Crown nominated

## ROAD TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY TOP 25

#	Horse	Trainer	Points
1.	Mandaloun	Brad Cox	52
2.	<b>Essential Quality</b>	<b>Brad Cox</b>	<b>30</b>
3.	Midnight Bourbon	Steve Asmussen	26
4.	Proxy	Mike Stidham	24
5.	Keepmeinmind	Robertino Diodoro	18
6.	Rombauer	Michel McCarthy	14
7.	Medina Spirit	Bob Baffert	14
8.	<b>Spielberg</b>	<b>Bob Baffert</b>	<b>13</b>
9.	<b>Jackie's Warrior</b>	<b>Steve Asmussen</b>	<b>12</b>
10.	Capo Kane	Harold Wyner	12
11.	Hot Rod Charlie	Doug O'Neill	10
12.	Get Her Number	Peter Miller	10
13.	Sittin On Go	Dale Romans	10
14.	Risk Taking	Chad Brown	10
15.	Candy Man Rocket	Bill Mott	10
16.	<b>Greatest Honour</b>	<b>Shug McGaughey III</b>	<b>10</b>
17.	Caddo River	Brad Cox	10
18.	<i>Brooklyn Strong</i>	<i>Daniel Velazquez</i>	<i>10</i>
19.	Life Is Good	Bob Baffert	10
20.	Cowan	Steve Asmussen	8
21.	O Besos	Greg Foley	5
22.	Nova Rags	Bill Mott	4
23.	Super Stock	Steve Asmussen	4
24.	<b>Tarantino</b>	<b>Rodolphe Brisset</b>	<b>4</b>
25.	Overtook	Todd Pletcher	4

Bold: running this weekend

Italics: no recent published workout

## SCULLY'S DERBY REPORT

**FEBRUARY TO CLOSE WITH THREE PREPS:** After a week hiatus, the Road to the Kentucky Derby resumes with three qualifiers this weekend. Here is an early look at the fields.

Friday's \$100,000 John Battaglia Memorial Stakes at Turfway Park will award 17 points (10-4-2-1) as a new Kentucky Derby qualifier, and the 1 1/16-mile Tapeta feature has attracted Grade I juvenile winner **Gretzky the Great**. The **Mark Casse**-trained colt will make his first appearance since finishing sixth in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (GI).

Gretzky the Great captured his lone attempt on an all-weather track, breaking his maiden by open lengths at Woodbine, and the son of 2016 Kentucky Derby winner Nyquist romped by 3 1/4 lengths in the Summer Stakes (GI) on turf. His back class merits serious respect in this spot.

However, new rider **Gerardo Corrales** will have to work out a trip from the rail in a 12-horse field. Gretzky the Great was able to race prominently throughout in all three wins, but there is speed to his outside in the Battaglia starting gate.

**Hush of a Storm** faces a class check in his stakes debut, but he's made fine progress for **Bill Morey** at Turfway this winter. A runaway maiden scorer in his second career outing, the stalker offered a sharp late kick to win going away over entry-level allowance foes last time. His Brisnet Speed ratings compare favorably, and Hush of a Storm should receive a perfect setup with leading rider **Santiago Gonzalez**.

Unbeaten juvenile champion **Essential Quality** will open his three-year-old season in the \$750,000 Southwest Stakes (GIII) at Oaklawn Park. Delayed 12 days because of adverse weather, the 17-point qualifier drew a field of seven.

Essential Quality captured his first two starts by open lengths, but the Tapit colt was more workmanlike recording a narrow win in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (G1), getting up late after switching to rating tactics.

I'm excited to see what he can offer at age three. After essentially overpowering foes in the first two starts, Essential Quality gained valuable seasoning while gutting out the Juvenile. And the gray colt looks like the type who will improve with added maturity.

However, Essential Quality could prove vulnerable against a classy rival with a tactical advantage.

**Jackie's Warrior**, who appears to be training forwardly at Fair Grounds in preparation for **Steve Asmussen**, should be lone speed. The multiple Grade I winner faltered when trying two turns in the Juvenile, but he was the only forward runner close at the end, finishing 3 1/4 lengths back in fourth after chasing a ridiculously taxing pace.

Future one-turn stars have had success over the 1 1/16-mile Southwest trip. Past winners include 1997 sprint champion **Smoke Glacken** and 2013 Breeders' Cup Sprint (G1) winner **Secret Circle**, and 2020 sprint champion **Whitmore** finished second in the 2016 Southwest before eventually cutting back in distance.

Jackie's Warrior may not be built for 1 1/4 miles in early spring, but he's eligible to thrive as lone speed in the Southwest.

Holy Bull Stakes. (GIII) winner **Greatest Honour** tops the expected field in Saturday's \$300,000 Fountain of Youth Stakes. (GII) at Gulfstream Park, which will be drawn Wednesday. Worth 85 points (50-20-10-5), the 1 1/16-mile race has a couple of intriguing prospects, Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf upsetter **Fire At Will** and impressive Swale Stakes (GIII) victor **Drain the Clock**, seeking to join the Kentucky Derby trail.

After opening his racing career with three consecutive placings in New York, Greatest Honour has won two straight in South Florida for **Shug McGaughey**. The **Tapit** colt wasn't flashy grinding out a 1 1/2-length maiden triumph in late December, but Greatest Honour moved forward in the Jan. 30 Holy Bull, offering an eye-catching turn of foot to win going away by 5 3/4 lengths.

Holy Bull runner-up **Tarantino** and third-placer **Prime Factor** are also expected back, and Drain the Clock has the talent to be a major factor if he handles the two-turn distance. He's been brilliant winning a pair of sprint stakes by a combined 13 3/4 lengths this year, but longer distances represent a legitimate hurdle for the **Maclean's Music** colt.

From 14 runnings of the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf, Fire At Will would be the first winner to return in a dirt race. A couple came back on synthetic surfaces, but the Juvenile Turf has produced few serious Kentucky Derby candidates the following spring.

**Mike Maker** is seeking to buck the trend with Fire At Will.  
— **James Scully/TwinSpires.com**

## LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS UPDATE

**CHAMPION VEQUIST RETURNS IN DAVONA DALE** — **Essential Quality** is not the only champion scheduled for a return to the track on Saturday. **Gary Barber**, **Wachtel Stable** and **Swilcan Stable**'s champion 2-year-old filly **Vequist** is slated to make her seasonal debut against 11 rivals in Saturday's \$200,000 Davona Dale (GII) at Gulfstream Park.

The Davona Dale is part of the Road to the Kentucky Oaks Championship Series and the winner will receive 50 points in

hopes of qualifying for the April 30, \$1.25 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI). The Davona Dale is one of nine stakes on Gulfstream's program and is carded as Race 12 with a post time of 5:04 p.m.

Vequist, the upset winner of the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (GI), began her serious preparation toward her return in early January with trainer **Butch Reid Jr.**'s South Florida-based string.

"She showed us no limits entering the Breeders' Cup," Reid said. "The first time I breezed her out of the gate at Parx (on July 12) she was supposed to go an easy half but went :48, 1:00, 1:12 and finished seven-eighths in 1:25. We had a pretty good idea she'd handle the two-turns. Nothing bothers this filly. If she gets a little dirt in her face that is no problem at all."

Reid, annually one of the top trainers in Pennsylvania at Parx, had a "win streak on his shoulders" entering the Breeders' Cup as Vequist attempted to become the third-consecutive Parx-based horse to win a Breeders' Cup race.

"I knew going into the Breeders' Cup I had a win streak on my shoulders because she would be the third-consecutive Parx-based horse to win a Breeders' Cup race," Reid said. "Luckily we could get it done and get them some notoriety in the media. She's proven good horses can come from anywhere."

Vequist drew post No. 3 with **Irad Ortiz Jr.** in the saddle.

The complete field for the Davona Dale from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): **Wholebodemeister** (Edgard Zayas, Juan Avila); **Lady Traveler** (Kendrick Carmouche, Dale Romans); **Curlin's Catch** (Jose Ortiz, Mark Casse); **Millefeuille** (John Velazquez, Bill Mott); **Crazy Beautiful** (Robby Albarado, Kenny McPeck); **Competitive Speed** (Leonel Reyes, Javier Gonzalez); **Adios Trippi** (Corey Lanerie, Peter Walder); **Hindsight** (Tyler Gaffalione, Vicki Oliver); **Happy Constitution** (Junior Alvarado, Antonio Sano); **Pens Street** (Miguel Vasquez, Rohan Crichton); and **Three Topsy Chix** (Julien Leparoux, Ian Wilkes).

#### ROAD TO THE LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS TOP 20

#	Horse	Trainer	Points
1.	Clairiere	Steve Asmussen	54
2.	Travel Column	Brad Cox	32
3.	<b>Vequist</b>	<b>Butch Reid Jr.</b>	<b>24</b>
4.	Dayoutoftheoffice	Tim Hamm	18
5.	Kalypso	Bob Baffert	18
6.	Girl Daddy	Dale Romans	14
7.	Simply Ravishing	Kenny McPeck	13
8.	Moon Swag	Brendan Walsh	12
9.	Malathaat	Todd Pletcher	10
10.	Will's Secret	Dallas Stewart	10
11.	The Grass Is Blue	Chad Brown	10
12.	Zaajel	Todd Pletcher	10
13.	<b>Curlin's Catch</b>	<b>Mark Casse</b>	<b>10</b>
14.	<b>Crazy Beautiful</b>	<b>Kenny McPeck</b>	<b>8</b>
15.	Coach	Brad Cox	6
16.	Littlestitious	Tom Amoss	5
17.	Souper Sensational	Mark Casse	4
18.	Javanica	Eoin Harty	4
19.	Lady Traveler	Dale Romans	4
20.	Frosteria	Bob Baffert	4

Bold: running this weekend

#### TAKING SHAPE

The possible fields for Kentucky Derby Championship Series races are fluid as owners and trainers vie for points on the "Road to the Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve." Below are known horses mentioned to be under consideration for each race based on published news reports and other sources.

#### GOTHAM (GIII)

Saturday, March 6, \$300,000, 3yo, 1 M, Aqueduct, Ozone, N.Y., Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Likely Starters:</b>			
Capo Kane (12)	Harold Wyner	130.4	E 8
Freedom Fighter (0)	Bob Baffert	133.8	E 6
Highly Motivated (0)	Chad Brown	135.7	P 1

#### Known Possible Starters:

Nicky the Vest (0)	Jonathan Thomas	135.0	E 1
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#### TAMPA BAY DERBY (GII)

Saturday, March 6, \$400,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Tampa Bay Downs, Oldsmar, Fla., Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Possible Starters:</b>			
Candy Man Rocket (10)	Bill Mott	133.0	E/P 8
Nova Rags (4)	Bill Mott	130.0	P 1
Hidden Stash (2)	Vicki Oliver	128.4	P 3
Super Strong (0)	Saffie Joseph	N/A	N/A

#### SAN FELIPE (GII)

Saturday, March 6, \$500,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Santa Anita, Arcadia, Calif., Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Likely Starters:</b>			
Life Is Good (10)	Bob Baffert	139.6	E 1
Roman Centurian (4)	Simon Callaghan	128.6	S 0
<b>Known Possible Starters:</b>			
Medina Spirit (14)	Bob Baffert	136.0	E 1

#### REBEL (GII)

Saturday, March 13, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Oaklawn Park, Hot Springs, Ark., Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Likely Starters:</b>			
Keepmeinmind (18)	Robertino Diodoro	135.8	S 1
Caddo River (10)	Brad Cox	141.9	E 8
Concert Tour (0)	Bob Baffert	137.8	E/P 6

#### Known Possible Starters:

Senor Buscador (0)	Todd Fincher	135.7	S 0
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#### TWINSPIRES.COM LOUISIANA DERBY (GII)

Saturday, March 20, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Fair Grounds, New Orleans, La., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Likely Starters:</b>			
Mandaloun (52)	Brad Cox	143.1	P 1
Midnight Bourbon (26)	Steve Asmussen	137.7	E 1
Proxy (24)	Mike Stidham	136.6	E/P 6
Hot Rod Charlie (10)	Doug O'Neill	136.4	P 1
Run Classic (0)	Bret Calhoun	126.5	E/P 6

#### Known Possible Starters:

O Besos (5)	Greg Foley	129.7	P 3
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### UAE DERBY (GII)

Saturday, March 27, \$2.5 million, 3yo, 1 3/16 M, Meydan Racecourse, Dubai,  
Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

<u>Horse (Points)</u>	<u>Trainer</u>
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#### Known Likely Starters:

Cowan	Steve Asmussen
Mouheeb	Nicolas Bachalard
Pink Kamehameha	Hideyuki Mori

### FLORIDA DERBY (GI)

Saturday, March 27, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Gulfstream Park, Hallandale  
Beach, Fla., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

### JEFF RUBY STEAKS (GIII)

Saturday, March 27, \$200,000, 3yo, 1 1/8 M (Tapeta), Turfway Park, Florence,  
Ky., Top 4 Points: 20-8-4-2.

<u>Horse (Points)</u>	<u>Trainer</u>	<u>Brisnet.com Prime Power</u>	<u>Run Style</u>
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#### Known Possible Starters:

O Besos (5)	Greg Foley	129.7	P 3
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### WOOD MEMORIAL (GII)

Saturday, April 3, \$750,000, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Aqueduct, Ozone, N.Y., Top 4  
Points: 100-40-20-10.

<u>Horse (Points)</u>	<u>Trainer</u>	<u>Brisnet.com Prime Power</u>	<u>Run Style</u>
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#### Known Possible Starters:

Risk Taking (10)	Chad Brown	133.6	P 3
Brooklyn Strong (10)	Daniel Velazquez	136.1	E/P 5

### BLUE GRASS (GII)

Saturday, April 3, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Keeneland, Lexington, Ky., Top 4  
Points: 100-40-20-10.

### SANTA ANITA DERBY (GI)

Saturday, April 3, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Santa Anita, Arcadia, Calif., Top 4  
Points: 100-40-20-10.

<u>Horse (Points)</u>	<u>Trainer</u>	<u>Brisnet.com Prime Power</u>	<u>Run Style</u>
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#### Known Possible Starters:

Rombauer (14)	Michael McCarthy	136.4	S 0
Senor Buscador (0)	Todd Fincher	135.7	S 0

### ARKANSAS DERBY (GI)

Saturday, April 10, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Oaklawn Park, Hot Springs, Ark.,  
Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

<u>Horse (Points)</u>	<u>Trainer</u>	<u>Brisnet.com Prime Power</u>	<u>Run Style</u>
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Brooklyn Strong (10)	Daniel Velazquez	136.1	E/P 5
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### LEXINGTON (GIII)

Saturday, April 10, \$200,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Keeneland, Lexington, Ky., Top  
4 Points: 20-8-4-2.

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